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ABSTRACT

Administrative bureaucracy and the professionalism of teachers have combined in contemporary schooling to structure both interpersonal relations and knowledge, leaving students and parents relatively powerless to control any of the educational processes. Through bureaucratic organization, schools create structures in which knowledge, teachers, and pupils are simultaneously bureaucratized and subjected to rationalized control. As schools increase in size, there are greater pressures for standardization and further control. Accountability and external legislation further standardize operation and performance. Such pressures may eventually lead to the "hyperrationalization" of schooling. Teachers respond to this hyperrationalization by asserting their professional autonomy. Advocates of professionalism claim the unique ability to make informed judgments in specified areas. In effect, they control access to professional knowledge, the distribution of that knowledge, and the conditions under which it will be made available to students. Ultimately, the principles of bureaucracy and those of professionalism are mutually reinforcing and increase the ideological, epistemological, and social processes of control over the student's destiny. Such a result is antithetical to liberal ideals of education. (Author/WD)

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BUREAUCRACY, PROFESSIONALISM AND KNOWLEDGE:

STRUCTURES OF AUTHORITY AND STRUCTURES OF CONTROL

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ABSTRACT

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Argues that the structures of knowledge made available in schools are influenced firstly by the bureaucratic features of educational systems (such as standardisation, hierarchisation, neutralisation, abstraction, objectification and validation by authority) and secondly by the professional features of teachers' ideologies (such as the development of therapeutic languages, ceremonies and rituals of diagnosis, counselling, advocacy, litigation and mystification). These structures, far from conflicting with each other, reinforce the structures of control employed by administrators and education systems to impose and justify their control of pupil behaviour, options and life chances. Further, the paper argues that educational administration can be seen in this way to be a process which exerts control via its structuring of knowledge and experience.

BUREAUCRACY, PROFESSIONALISM AND KNOWLEDGE: STRUCTURES OF AUTHORITY AND STRUCTURES OF CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

Educational administration is a technology of control. Specifically it is a technology of control devoted to (i) the production and allocation of people, and (ii) the production and allocation of knowledge. Clearly, the process of schooling does not exhaust the social mechanisms by which control is exercised over people and knowledge, but it is probably the most ubiquitous and powerful process devoted to such control. It is also one of the few processes within which the relations between the management of people and the management of knowledge are supposedly explicit.

This is not to say that the reciprocal relationship between the production and allocation of people and the production and allocation of knowledge is well understood. Far from it. Moreover, the ways in which the internal processes of schooling relate to, and are influenced by, external social structures and interests is a matter of considerable debate. So far this debate has been conducted either in general terms, where the overall relationship of the school functions with the demands of capitalism are argued (cf. Bowles & Gintis, 1976), or in very specific terms, where the internal processes of classrooms provide the occasion for speculations on the impact of class structures on the school (cf. Sharp & Green, 1975). What is largely missing from these radical analyses is any consideration of the administrative structures through which control over school structures, pedagogy, curriculum and the lives of pupils is exercised. It is the argument of this paper that the two administrative principles operative in schools, the bureaucracy of administrators and the professionalism of teachers, have combined in contemporary schooling to structure both interpersonal relations and knowledge in ways which virtually eliminate the possibility of students, or

their parents exerting any control over the processes of schooling in which they are forcibly enmeshed.

THE CONTEXT OF THE ARGUMENT : DISTRIBUTION AND PRODUCTION

Two competing camps contend the explanation of relations between schooling and social structure. The first, human capital theory, claims that schools maximise the distribution of knowledge in a given population, allowing talented individuals to acquire knowledge which, when combined with appropriate motivation, allows upward mobility while at the same time ensuring the continuous supply of well-trained technical/scientific manpower needed to sustain economic growth. Educational opportunity, upward mobility, technical knowledge and economic growth are thus inseparably linked and schooling is a fundamental processes in the achievement of economic and social progress. Within the context of this argument, the administrative problem is to maintain control over the delicate interplay between various aspects (costs and benefits, rates of mobility, etc.) of the system with a view to increasing efficiency, productivity and growth (cf. Karabel & Halsey, 1977).

An alternative view is presented by the reproductionists, who argue that there is not and seldom has been much evidence of upward social mobility through education. Moreover, they also point to the decreasing ability of the 'system' to provide further increases in either employment, productivity or growth. Given that there is no mobility via education, schools are argued as actively confirming individuals in their 'proper places' in a hierarchical division of labour. Moreover, schools are argued as serving to reconcile individuals to their fate by the encouragement of particular dispositions through the hidden curriculum of behavioural management and personality deformation (cf. Bowles &

Gintis, 1976). Within this argument, the function of educational administration is that of ensuring class-related controls over the reproduction of knowledge, culture, employability and status.

These two positions agree that education is both a distributive and a productive process, though as Apple (1980) points out 'they tend to be pre-occupied with the issue of distribution'. Human capital theory argues that a major function of schools is the distribution of technical knowledge and opportunity. Reproductionist arguments focus on the schools' distribution and confirmation of class-related positions. Some attention has, however, been given to the production aspects of schooling. Within the context of human relations theory, McClelland (1961) for example, has argued the function of schooling in producing achievement oriented entrepreneurs. Within the context of reproduction theory, it is argued that schools produce essential elements of class consciousness and acquiescence (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1978). Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) argued the importance of schooling as an essential component and pre-condition of the production of 'cultural capital'.

SCHOOLING AND THE ACCUMULATION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

In order to understand the importance of the school in the process of capital accumulation in advanced capitalist societies, it is necessary to appreciate the point that capital accumulation through surplus value is increasingly dependent, not upon wage labour but upon the application of technology. The scientific/technical knowledge which supports such a system is a primary requisite of the society and as such the most highly prized component of cultural capital. The school plays an essential part in the maintenance and continuous production of such capital. However, what is needed is not a widespread

distribution of this particular form of cultural capital (quite the reverse, as making specialist forms of technical knowledge widely available reduces the profitability of its possession, despite the protection of patent laws), but its continued production. Thus,

> 'As long as the knowledge is continuously and efficiently produced the school itself ... is efficient. Thus, certain low levels of achievement on the part of 'minority' group students, children of the poor, and so on, can be tolerated. It is less consequential to the economy than is the generation of the knowledge itself.'
>
> (Apple, 1979; 36-37)

Moreover, because of the importance of the production and accumulation of cultural capital in the form of techno-scientific knowledge, the school is pressed to ensure that this particular form of knowledge occupies the highest status within its curriculum.

While techno-scientific knowledge is thus enshrined in the curriculum as the knowledge of most worth, its characteristics become dominant in the epistemological and ideological structure of the school's activity. The supposed characteristics of the 'scientific view' such as objectivity, impartiality, appeal to evidence etc. become constitutive of the defining characteristics of what counts as knowledge. This view of knowledge becomes an epistemological and ideological imperative and is linked to wider social processes of legitimation and de-politicisation, where the legitimacy of the state is found in:

> '... the imperatives of scientific technical progress, which alone can guarantee economic growth and stability. Society must be run on rational lines by technical experts. The only problems are technical problems and the development of the social system must obey the logic of scientific progress.'
>
> (Wilby, 1979: 667.)

As Habermas (1973) suggests, such appeals remove decisions from a realm of public debate and the masses are thus depoliticised. The language and the structures of both education and government are thereby defined in supposedly neutral techno-scientific ways, and the problems and issues resolved by technical elite which is uniquely able to provide solutions on the basis of facts and technical knowledge.

However, as Apple points out, such

> 'technical knowledge is not necessarily a neutral commodity within the context of a corporate economy. This is especially important today since it is becoming increasingly clear that there is nearly a total corporate monopolisation of technical knowledge and technological intelligence.'
> (Apple, 1980: 12)

Moreover, as Gorz (1976) has argued, 'in economies like our own, technical knowledge has been produced and organised in ways which have benefited corporate concerns'. This has occurred not only in terms of the application of technical knowledge to increase mechanical efficiency but also its application in order to increase control over the processes of work, in order to increase the rate of accumulation of profits. The hierarchical division of labour and the breaking down of crafts into atomistic units capable of being reorganised on the factory floor are essential components, not in the logic of techno-scientific knowledge, but in the process of social control designed to increase and maximise capital accumulation. The emergence of techno-scientific knowledge as the dominant form of knowledge in schools is thus related to two major functions, (i) the production of techno-scientific cultural capital, and (ii) the legitimation of corporate organisation of work. Each of these functions of schooling is related to the attempts of corporate capitalism to (i) maximise the accumulation of capital via the employment of technical knowledge and (ii) maximise the effectiveness of control over the productive process. The two

major mechanisms through which these functions have been integrated in schools are the mechanisms of bureaucracy and professionalism.

THE BUREAUCRATISATION OF SCHOOLING

Dimmock (1965) defines bureaucracy as a way of life in which institutions over-shadow individuals. The idea of bureaucracies as social organisations with a continuing structure of rules, positions, relations, behaviours, through which individuals pass is a powerful one. Weber's classic definition of bureaucracies supports such a picture. It is difficult to realise, from our current historical position that bureaucracy was once a revolutionary institution, whose very impersonality and rule-bound structure was welcomed as some guarantee against nepotism, political patronage of corrupt governments and the arbitrary exercise of power. Weber's emphasis on the rationality of bureaucratic organisations and the efficiency they brought to the collection and collation of information, the integration and co-ordination of decision making, and the resulting increases in control has been complemented by many studies of the effects of bureaucracy on personal relations and development. One of the most interesting is that of Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973), who investigate the cognitive style of bureaucratic consciousness. The elements they identify are orderliness (in association with taxonomic hierarchies); componentiality (in the division of knowledge); arbitrariness (in the creation of structures and boundaries); justice (defined in association with predictability); abstraction (in the appeal to generalise rules); moralised anonimity (which defines relations with clients); and passivity (in the definition of the client's role).

Wake (1979) has taken this analysis and shown how it applies to the ways in which schools create similar structures through which knowledge, teachers and pupils are simultaneously bureaucratised. In particular, Wake argues that the bureaucratisation of schools leads directly to a certain structuring of knowledge:

> 'The major demands placed upon the structures of knowledge by bureaucratised schools are: that the knowledge be divided into components or relatively discrete components; that the units of knowledge be ordered in sequence; that the knowledge be communicable from one person to another using conventional media of communication; that success in acquisition of part, if not most of the knowledge, is recordable in quantifiable form; that the knowledge be objectified in the sense of having an existence independent of its human origins; that the knowledge is stratified into various levels of status or prestige; that knowledge based upon concrete experience be treated as low status, but that knowledge expressed in abstract and generalised principles be regarded as having high status.'
>
> (Wake, 1979: 16)

Thus, the structure of knowledge in bureaucratised schools is directly related to the imperatives of bureaucracy, where the:

> 'overriding consideration in selecting, structuring and presenting knowledge ... is to facilitate the administration of an organisation.'
>
> (Wake, 1979: 16)

The overall purpose of the structuring of knowledge is the rationalisation of organisational life and its control by the administration. The logic of the process is that of ensuring compliance with procedures in order to attain the school's goals. Thus:

> 'as administrators and supervisors attempt to increase control over achievement of the school's goals, they frequently work to increase reliability in decision making processes and in behaviours of teachers and students. This is often accomplished by instituting and implementing policies, standard operations procedures, rules and regulations to guide behaviour within the human organisation. Uniformity of behaviour is seen as a powerful means to move large numbers of people towards goals, with a minimum amount of confusion and conflict.'
>
> (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1979: 46)

Moreover, as the size of units increases, both within schools and school systems, there are increasing pressures towards standardisation and further control, what Habermas calls 'steering mechanisms'. Internal co-ordination and overall direction becomes an increasingly problematic and increasingly urgent concern:

> 'with growth the problems of internal control increase and are solved "by more standardisation of work, centralisation of the major decisions, and the proliferation of regulations over work".'
>
> (Corwin, 1970:45)

Again, external political considerations of accountability force more and more legislation on schools and systems which is designed to further standardise internal operation and performance. The result is that 'to the extent that more attention is given to procedures, and to the extent that procedures are multiplied, schools become more proceduralised, more bureaucratised, more rationalised' (Wise, 1977: 43).

As a result of these pressures, the language of administrators becomes the language of control. As Wolcott points out 'the essence of being a good technocrat is to exert control' (Wolcott, 1977: 159). The procedures for exerting control are believed to be rational.

> 'Arriving at systematic order through rational planning is (a) central technocratic pre-occupation. The plan becomes all important, an end rather than a means. Everything turns on clearly stated goals and purposes ... technocratic endeavour thrives under the banner of the rational planning ideology.'
>
> (Wolcott, 1977: 160)

The whole thrust of administrative action is, therefore, towards greater control. One of the manifestations of this process is the pressure towards the standardisation, bureaucratisation, and rationalisationof knowledge in the ways described above. The problem is, however, that such pressures may lead to the 'hyper-rationalisation' of schooling where:

> 'policy makers efforts to reform school practices result from and in an excessively rational view of schooling, where, what appears logical becomes the basis for action. However, what appears rational may or may not have a connection to reality.'
>
> (Wise, 1977: 44)

As a result of the gap between rationale and reality, hyper-rationalisation may occur where 'further rationalisation ceases to be functional' (Wise, 1977: 56).

The impact of bureaucracy on schools is therefore much more than a matter of increasing organisational efficiency. The process of rationalisation affects both the epistemological structure of the school, in that it organises knowledge in ways which serve organisational rather than individual purposes, and the social structure of the school in that relations between individuals are hierarchised, routinised and rationalised in ways which again serve organisational rather than individual purposes.

Moreover, bureaucratisation in schools, as elsewhere, is, as Weber suggested, a move towards the creation of rational structures of control. As such, bureaucratic schools provide a way of life in which the institutional structures overwhelm and subvert individual interests and purposes.

TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONALISM

The response of teachers to the hyper-rationalisation of schooling is the assertion of professional autonomy. In part, this is a response to the element of de-skilling (cf. Braverman, 1974), implicit in the bureaucratic routinisation of teaching. But it is also a response driven by the determination of an emerging occupational group for status and power (cf. Bledstein, 1976). In essence, the

claim of teachers for professional status is an attempt to invoke a set of ideological justifications for procedures of control based on premises somwhat different from those of institutional rationality preferred by administrators.

The justifications for professional status and autonomy are based upon two major ideas, One, that professionals undergo long periods of training, which equip them with an esoteric body of knowledge, the technical skills to pursue their work, and, most important, an acute sense of judgement in uncertain situations. And, two, that professionals are dedicated to a primary emphasis of serving the best interests of their clients in a relationship of trust and responsibility.

The principles upon which professional, rather than bureaucratic knowledge, exist are claimed to be those which enable professionals to grasp the concepts behind a particular activity. The claim to professional prestige rests on an awareness of:

> 'a total coherent system of necessary knowledge within a precise territory (and) the control of intrinsic relationships which allow the professional to perceive and predict those inconspicuous and unseen variables which (determine) an entire system of developments'.
> (Bledstein, 1976: 88-89)

This claim to esoteric expertise also sets the professional off from ordinary men. The claim to scientific creative knowledge and imagination is an especially powerful factor in establishing social distance.

In professions, this claim to a unique epistemological status is translated into claims for unique social status via the rituals of professionalism. Bledstein argues historically that:

> 'the more elaborate the rituals of the profession, the more esoteric its theoretical knowledge, the more imposing its symbol of authority, the more respectable its demeanour, the more vivid its service to society, the more prestige and status the public was willing to bestow upon its representatives'.
> (Bledstein, 1976: 94)

The foundation of these claims was essentially an epistemological one based upon the professionals' familiarity with science:

> 'Commonsense, ordinary understanding, and personal negotiations no longer were the effective means of communication in society ... clients found themselves compelled to believe, on simple faith, that a higher rationality called scientific knowledge, decided one's fate. The professional appeared in the role of a magician, casting a spell over the client and requiring complete confidence; and the client listened to words that often sounded metaphysical and even mystical.'
>
> (Bledstein, 1976: 94)

Thus, the appeal for specialised knowledge - an exclusive epistemology - allowed not only the defence of autonomy, but also structured the relationship of professional and client as one of dependence and passivity. It facilitated both epistemological and social control.

Needless to say, the assertion of such autonomy and control allowed, though it did not demand, the exploitation of clients. Bledstein's view is that

> 'Perhaps no calvinist system of thought ever made use of people more effectively than did the culture of professionalism. The professional person extended the gift of his special powers to the client who was, by definition, unworthy of such attention. And in return, the professional expected at the very least to receive the psychic reward of the client's unqualified gratitude; when appropriate he expected to receive ample tangible reward from the client's pocketbook'.
>
> (Bledstein, 1976: 102-3)

Moreover, no client merited a crueler fate, no client was quite so undeserving and detestable as the one who betrayed his patron by appearing to be ungrateful.

The ideological foundations of professionalism lie, therefore, in claims to the monopoly of an exclusive epistemology, the unique ability to make informed judgements in specified areas, and the willingness to subordinate individual interests to those of clients. The structure of the foundations of professionalism lie in the control of access to professional knowledge, control of the distribution of that knowledge, and control over the conditions under which it will be made available on behalf of clients.

PROFESSIONALISM AND SCHOOLING

The major thrust of professionalism in teaching is based in the argument of a concern for children, and an individual concern for their best interests as clients. Moreover, the indeterminacy of the teacher's task, in the face of the range of abilities, characteristics, needs, and purposes of children, forms the basis of the claim that teaching is not a routine skill but a matter of professional judgement. The teacher's familiarity with a growing body of increasingly specialised knowledge, moreover, and his involvement in subject associations gives him exclusive access to certain forms of knowledge not directly available to pupils or parents. Thus, the teacher claims professional status on the basis of an exclusive epistemology, professional judgement, and his service of client interests.

The teaching profession, in keeping with the traditions of other professions, is adept at the development of rituals which display and legitimise the basis of these claims. The development of therapeutic languages, such as those involved in counselling and guidance, are, for instance, couched in terms which appear to consider clients' interests. Similarly, the emergence of remedial specialists for the assistance of the less able, the handicapped, and the culturally deprived, have the appearance of professional concern for client interests.

However, as Cicourel and Kitsuse (1963) pointed out, the impact of such programs is to increase the power of teachers and decrease the power of pupils, who not only become subject to professional judgement of their skills and performance, but also to the professional judgement of their moral, personal and social worth. The emergence and justification of professional specialisms in remedial teaching, adjustment class, counselling, behaviour therapy, and so on, further fragments the pupil's relation with the school, and defines his social location within it to his disadvantage (cf. Schofield, 1979).

In the area of evaluation, the professional expertise of teachers relies increasingly on the application and interpretation of tests, most of which are norm referenced and locate pupils vis-a-vis other pupils, not according to skills they may have or have not learnt. The ways in which achievement is reported to parents are ritualised in a fashion which obscures the reality of children's achievement. The marking of children on a 5-point scale or the standardised results of HSC are perfect professional protection for teachers as they appear to objectify the reality of children's ability. In effect, they direct attention from the effectiveness of teaching and locate success and failure in the individual psyche of the child (cf. Bates,1977).

Again, investigation by parents of a process of teaching and the particular treatment of their children, are responded to in terms of the presumed superiority of professional judgement, and the need to consider the child's position vis-a-vis other clients. Professional responsibility is therefore limited, not only by the professional assessment of how the child is able to perform, but also judgement of the problems raised by the issue of special treatment.

In each of these areas, two major claims are made, firstly, that the cognitive and epistemological superiority of the professional provides a unique competence in the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of pupils, and secondly, that the judgement of the client's situation is definable on the basis of professional experience and expertise. Each of these claims justifies and maintains a social distance between professional and client, thus reducing the competence and effectiveness of the client. In Illich's (1977) terms 'the claim to professional authority disables clients'.

BUREAUCRACY, PROFESSIONALISM AND SCHOOLING

The principles of bureaucracy and the principles of professionalism have been argued to be anti-thetical (cf. Corwin, 1965, 1970). Moreover, the epistemological concerns of teachers and technocrats have been argued as incompatible and a major source of tension within schools (Wolcott, 1977). What such debate has obscured is that in terms of the experience of pupils, the epistemological and psychological processes of control employed by bureaucracy and by profession are mutually reinforcing. In particular, the amalgamation of bureaucracy and profession within contemporary organisational structures, such as those developing within education, further reduces the power of the client and increases the ideological, epistemological and social processes of control over his destiny.

Organisational professions such as teaching amalgamate the principles of bureaucracy and professionalism in order to extend their capacity as steering mechanisms within a techno-scientific rationale. In the case of education, as in the case of other educational professions:

> 'the claim of specialised or professional expertise for techno-bureaucratic functions, which are unspecific and polyvalent, does not aim at asserting independent professional status; rather, it borrows from a general ideology of professionalism to justify techno-bureaucratic power'.
>
> (Larson, 1977: 179)

The major advantage of this amalgamation for bureaucracies is that they are no longer seen as simply bureaucratic but as expert bureaucracies, informed and guided by the exclusive epistemological expertise and the informed judgement of professionals. Thus, their role is legitimised in terms of appeal to the ideologies of a rational planning model. The effect is, as was argued earlier, the depoliticisation of the public, or in education's case, the pupils and parents (Larson, 1977).

The major advantage of this amalgamation for professionals is that, in the case of education, the insecure status of the profession is given legal and governmental sanction within the framework of overall political legitimacy. In the case of teachers, state certification, registration, employment and control, provides a framework of security which might otherwise not be available (cf. Musgrove, 1969).

The integration of professional and bureaucratic structures within corporate professional structures thus removes client concern from the professional and substitutes an emphasis on client control:

> '... the typical techno-bureaucratic professions cannot even be considered indifferent to their clients: they simply do not have an autonomous orientation toward the clients, except indirectly'.
>
> (Larson, 1977: 189)

Moreover, the position of the client vis-a-vis such organisations is further reduced by the ideological appeals of professionals within the organisation:

> 'Ideological appeals to the safeguard of professional judgements can be used by all professions when they are threatened with client revolt, or, more mildly, with client demands for some rights of review. Techno-bureaucratic professions participate fully in this ideological practice'.
>
> (Larson, 1977: 189)

AUTHORITY AND CONTROL

The incorporation of the professional ideology of teachers within the techno-bureaucratic structure of education can be seen, therefore, as part of a process of extending the ability of schools and school systems to control their epistemological, inter-personal and social structures. As the authority of the professional becomes incorporated within the control structures of the school, schooling is increasingly tied to the processes of legitimation of the techno-scientific rationality and the ideology of contemporary industrial states, and thus to the processes of social and economic organisation required by the corporate capitalist structure. The equation between schooling, ability, status and power becomes tightened and justified. The result is the extension of a hierarchical division of society, the fragmentation of interests and needs, the atomisation of knowledge and social structure, and its re-integration in ways which are manipulable by ideological, inter-personal and social steering mechanisms.

> 'Today knowledge is acquired and produced within educational and occupational hierarchies, which are, by their structure, inegalitarian, anti-democratic, and alienating. These structures achieve a fusion between the progressive content of special competencies and the requirements of a system of domination. They serve, in this sense, as a principal support of the dominant ideology.'
>
> (Larson, 1977: 243)

CONCLUSION

It need hardly be said that the functions of schooling revealed by the analysis of the techno-bureaucratic nature of schooling is anti-thetical to the liberal ideas of education, socialist aspirations towards equality, or personal aspirations towards autonomy. The task of educators who are dismayed by such an analysis is surely the challenging of the ideological and social structures which represent a denial of their personal and educational ideals. That such a task is not easy is pointed out by Larson 'breaking with ideology, finding new forms for the social production of knowledge and the uses of social competence demands passion, vision and hard work' (Larson, 1977: 243). That such a task is imperative is indicated by the pervasive relationships between bureaucracy, professionalism, knowledge and the structures of authority and control.

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